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## Environmental Quality Incentives Program

**EQIP and EQIP-CIC application batching date for FY23 is October 13, 2022.**

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - Classic

### Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that can provide financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that address natural resource concerns. EQIP provides assistance to agricultural producers in order to improve natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved wildlife habitat.

### Interested applicants

For more information about EQIP, how to apply and program eligibility requirements, interested applicants should contact a NRCS field office in the county which your own land or where you have an agricultural operation. Applicants should review the [Get Started with NRCS - 5 Steps to Assistance](#) for additional information.

View the [EQIP Flyer](#) for a program overview.

Visit the [USDA Service Center Locator](#) to find the NRCS representative for your county.

### How to apply

The applicant process is a continuous process. Those who are interested in EQIP should work with their local NRCS office to identify and plan the conservation measures needed to address the resource concern identified on your land. Those who have previously developed a conservation plan with NRCS could already have the conservation planning step completed.

Those who are applying for EQIP for the first time should schedule a meeting with NRCS to discuss their options before moving forward. Local NRCS conservationists will help you develop a conservation plan, identify conservation measures and pursue funding through one of the EQIP fund pool options available in Washington.

### Establish Eligibility with USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA)

**Each applicant must establish themselves as a USDA customer and attain all Farm Service Agency (FSA) eligibility requirements.**

### Important information regarding FSA eligibility

One eligibility requirement that is not instantaneous is the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) determination. On average, AGI determinations takes 3 weeks to be processed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Weeks prior

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to the application cut-off date, it is highly recommended that applicants submit their completed AGI form to FSA. **Submitting your AGI form to FSA on the last day will result in your AGI eligibility not being met by the cutoff date for FY23.**

FSA offices can be found by visiting the USDA [Service Center Locator](#) to find the NRCS and FSA representatives for your county.

Although applications are accepted on a year-round basis, eligible producers, entities, & water management entities interested in EQIP Classic must meet the following eligibility requirements to be considered for funding in fiscal year 2023:

- Attain all necessary FSA eligibility determinations (AD-1026, AGI, FTE, CCC-902), and
- Submit an [NRCS CPA-1200](#) Conservation Program Application to their local NRCS office

Visit USDA [Service Center Locator](#) to find the NRCS and FSA representatives for your county.

## Eligibility

Agricultural producers, subsistence landowners, non-industrial private forestland and Tribes are eligible to apply for EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm or ranch lands.

Socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited resource farmers, Indian tribes, and veterans are eligible for an increased payment rate and may receive advance payment of up to 50 percent to purchase materials and services needed to implement conservation practices included in their EQIP contract.

## Applicants must:

- Control or own eligible land
- Comply with adjusted gross income limitation (AGI) provisions
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements
- Have an identifiable Resource Concern on the offered land unit(s)
- Work with NRCS to develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operations to solve the identified Resource Concern(s)

## Submitting an Application

Any interested applicant may submit an [NRCS CPA-1200](#) Conservation Program Application for participation in EQIP. The State Conservationist has established a sign-up period to select the highest ranked applications for funding based on the NRCS ranking process, contract approval is dependent on program eligibility determinations.

## Application Documents

- [NRCS CPA-1200](#) Conservation Program Application (10/2021) ([Spanish](#) | [Hmong](#) | [Chinese](#))
- [NRCS CPA-1200B](#) Conservation Program Application Instructions ([Spanish](#) | [Hmong](#) | [Chinese](#))
- [NRCS CPA-1200C](#) Conservation Program Application Continuation Page ([Spanish](#) | [Hmong](#) | [Chinese](#))
- [NRCS CPA-1202](#) Conservation Program Contract Appendix

## Ranking Process

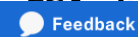
The State Conservationist, in consultation with the State Technical Committee has developed ranking criteria to prioritize and subsequently fund applications addressing priority natural resource concerns in Washington. EQIP funding decisions are based on an evaluation process that includes application screening and ranking criteria. The screening tool is used to prioritize assistance based on factors such as a history of contract compliance. NRCS uses the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) to assess the site vulnerability, existing conditions, and identify potential resource concerns on a unit of land. After CART assessment, NRCS uses CART Ranking to evaluate an application in all applicable funding pools.

## Related Resources

- [EQIP Program Ranking Criteria](#)
- [Resource Concern fact sheets](#)
- EQIP-CIC Statewide Forestry Ranking Pool (**Pending**)
- EQIP-CIC Groundwater Ranking Pool (**Pending**)
- EQIP-CIC Wind Erosion Ranking Pool (**Pending**)

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**EQIP Classic and EQIP CIC FSA Eligibility cutoff date for**



**FY2022: November 18, 2022****National EQIP Initiatives**

| <i>Funding Pool</i>                       | <i>Description</i>  |
|---|---|
|   | NRCS assists private landowners with implementation of irrigation conservation practices that improve watering efficiency. Project areas are Whitestone Reclamation District and Kittitas Reclamation District  |
| <b>WaterSmart</b>                         | FY23 Watersmart ranking tools <b>(Pending)</b><br>Whitestone Priority Area Map ( <a href="#">PDF</a>   <a href="#">Large Image File</a> )<br>Kittitas Priority Area Map ( <a href="#">PDF</a>   <a href="#">Large Image File</a> )  |
| <b>High Tunnel System</b>                 | High Tunnels are available to agricultural producers and subsistence lifestyle applicants designed to strengthen local and regional food markets and increase the use of sustainable conservation practices that will improve plant and soil quality, reduce nutrient and pesticide transport and reduce energy inputs.<br><br><a href="#">High Tunnel Fact Sheet</a><br>FY23 High Tunnel Ranking Pool Report <b>(Pending)</b>  |
| <b>Energy Initiative</b>                  | Assist producers to conserve energy on their farms through an Agriculture Energy Management Plan (AgEMP), also known as an on-farm energy audit, and provide assistance to implement various recommended measures identified in an energy audit.<br><br><a href="#">Energy Fact Sheet</a><br>FY23 On Farm Energy Ranking Pool Report <b>(Pending)</b>   |
| <b>Organic Initiative</b>                 | Special EQIP funding is available to organic growers and those transitioning to organic production.<br><br><a href="#">Organic Fact Sheet</a><br><a href="#">Organic ASK NRCS Brochure</a><br>FY23 Organic Transition Ranking Pool Report <b>(Pending)</b>  |
| <b>Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs)</b> | A Conservation Activity Plan can be developed for producers to identify conservation practices needed to address a specific natural resource need. Current CAPs include: Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), Nutrient Management Plan (NMP), Forest Management Plan(FMP), Grazing Management Plan (GMP), Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM), Soil Health Management Plan (SHM), Irrigation Water Management Plan (IWM), Drainage Management Plan (DMP), Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AEM), Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition, Fish & Wildlife Management Plan (FWM), Pollinator Habitat Plan (PH).<br><br>FY23 Statewide CAP Ranking Pool Report <b>(Pending)</b> |
| <b>National Water Quality Initiative</b>  | The National Water Quality Initiative work in priority watersheds to help farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams. NRCS will help producers implement conservation and management practices through a systems approach to control and trap nutrient and manure runoff.<br><br>FY23 NWQI-Nooksack Ranking Pool Report <b>(Pending)</b><br>FY23 NWQI-UnionFlats Ranking Pool Report <b>(Pending)</b><br><a href="#">NWQI Priority Areas Map</a>   <a href="#">Nooksack and Union Flats</a>  |

**National Air Quality Initiative**

This initiative is designed to help producers meet air quality compliance requirements, as well as an opportunity to support practices which address impacts associated with particulate matter and greenhouse gases. In eligible counties, this initiative will provide eligible producers with program support to address serious air quality concerns from agricultural operations and help meet regulatory requirements. See the maps below for potential locations eligible for NAQI funding.

[Statewide AQ Cropland Particulate Matter Map \(PM2p5\)](#)  
[Statewide AQ Forest Particulate Matter Map](#)  
[Statewide NAQI Cropland Particulate Matter Map \(PM10\)](#)  
FY23 NAQI Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership**

These projects build on existing projects and partnerships. By leveraging technical and financial resources and coordinating activities on adjacent public and private lands, conservation work by NRCS and US Forest Service will be more efficient and effective in these watersheds.

*As of August 2021 there is no joint chiefs project area identified for funding in WA.*

**State EQIP Initiatives**

*Funding Pool*

*Description*

**Statewide Buffer**

NRCS assists applicants with installing buffers along streams and waterbodies to reduce sediment, pollutants, and decrease stream temperatures.

**Washington's Disaster Initiative**

NRCS is working with applicants that have been impacted by flooding or wildfire on their property. Producers statewide who were impacted by wildfires will be eligible to rest their burnt grazing land for one year. Producers affected by flooding in the Nooksack and Skagit river watersheds will be eligible for assistance in repairing damage from flooding.

FY23 Wildfire Recovery Ranking Pool **(Pending)**

**Limited Resources Farmer or Rancher (LRFR)**

NRCS assists private landowners with the implementation of conservation practices on all landuses within Washington State that qualify as a LRFR

1. Individual producer:
  - i. A person with direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous 2 fiscal years (adjusted for inflation using Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by National Agricultural Statistical Service), and
  - ii. Has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years (to be determined annually using Commerce Department Data); or
2. A legal entity or joint operation if all individual members independently qualify under paragraph (1) of this definition.

FY23 Limited Resource Farmer Rancher Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Urban Agriculture**

Urban agriculture pioneers are taking action in their communities, growing not only fresh, healthy produce, but also providing jobs, beautifying their neighborhoods, and offering access to fresh, healthy food in areas where grocery stores are sparse.

As American agriculture continues to grow in new directions, NRCS conservation assistance is growing along with it. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for assistance for urban growers in areas such as:

- **Soil Health**
- **Irrigation and Water Conservation**
- **Weeds and Pests**
- **High Tunnels.** NRCS can provide financial assistance for high tunnels, used to extend the growing season and to protect plants from harsh weather, air pollution and pests. By making local produce available for more months in the year, fewer resources are used to transport food to plates.

[Washington map of Urban Agriculture areas](#)  
FY23 Urban Ag ranking tool **(Pending)**

**Statewide Wildlife (Aquatic)**

Financial and technical assistance is available to support implementation of habitat restoration and enhancement projects that will benefit one or more of the following: Salmon & Steelhead or Native Olympia Oyst



and other aquatic species, restore stream side riparian habitat, restore habitat in streams, rivers, and wetlands, improve floodplain habitat, and increase intertidal substrate resources for native oyster will be prioritized for funding.

- [Native Olympia Oyster Fact Sheet](#)
- FY23 Olympia Oyster Restoration Initiative ranking tool **(Pending)**
- [Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Fact Sheet](#)
- FY23 Statewide Aquatic Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Statewide Wildlife (Terrestrial)**

Financial and technical assistance is available to support implementation of habitat restoration and enhancement projects that will benefit one or more of the following: Threatened and Endangered Wildlife (State and Federally listed), Pollinators (emphasis on Monarch Butterfly), and Wildlife Corridors. Applications for projects that improve quantity and quality of forage and cover, improve habitat connectivity, and restore habitat for sensitive species will be prioritized for funding.

- FY23 Statewide Wildlife Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI)**

NRCS developed the Sage-grouse Initiative to help private landowners voluntarily conserve sage-grouse populations and habitat on their working lands. In Washington, NRCS identified potential threats to sage grouse and their habitat and determined specific conservation practices to reduce those threats. Technical and financial assistance through EQIP is available for implementing the specific practices.

- [SGI Priority Areas Maps](#)
- FY23 Sage Grouse Initiative general ranking tool **(Pending)**

**CNMP Initiative**

NRCS assists private landowners with the implementation of their previously developed Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)

- FY23 Statewide CNMP Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Statewide Forestry**

NRCS assists private landowners with the implementation of their previously developed and approved Forest Management Plan (FMP)

- FY23 Statewide Forestry Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Statewide Irrigation**

NRCS assists private landowners with implementation of irrigation conservation practices that improve watering efficiency.

- FY23 Statewide Irrigation Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Statewide Cropland**

NRCS assists private landowners with the implementation of conservation practices that reduce or eliminate Ephemeral Gully and/or Wind Erosion.

- FY23 Statewide Cropland Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

**Statewide Soil Health**

NRCS assists private landowners with the implementation of conservation practices that improve soil health.

- FY23 Statewide Soil Health Ranking Pool **(Pending)**

**Sentinel Lands**

NRCS, working with other State and Federal partners, have identified areas where focused conservation can affect Threatened and Endangered species habitat near Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM).

- [Sentinel Lands area map](#)
- FY23 Sentinel lands ranking tool **(Pending)**

**Beginning Farmer or Rancher**

NRCS assists private landowners with the implementation of conservation practices on all landuses within Washington State that qualify as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher.

The term “Beginning Farmer or Rancher” means a participant who:



Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of a legal entity, and who ...  
Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.

In the case of a contract with an individual, individually or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located. In the case of a contract made with a legal entity, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that the members provide some amount of the management, or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.

FY23 Statewide BF all land uses ranking tool **(Pending)**

NRCS assists private landowners with the implementation of conservation practices on all landuses within Washington State that qualify as Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher.

The term "Socially Disadvantaged" means an individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

These groups consist of the following:

**Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher**

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics

Note: Gender alone is not a covered group for the purposes of NRCS conservation programs. The term entities reflect a broad interpretation to include partnerships, couples, legal entities, etc.

FY23 Socially Disadvantaged Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**

NRCS assists Tribes with the implementation of conservation practices for identified Plant/Animal/Aquatic species of cultural importance to each Tribe.

**Statewide Tribal Local Working Group**

- FY23 Tribal Aquatic Species Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**
- FY23 Tribal Plant Species Ranking Pool Report **(Pending)**



NRCS assists private landowners with each of the ten Local Working Groups (LWG) throughout the state to the implement conservation practices that solve the local Resource Concerns identified and prioritized by the LWG.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Local Working Groups | FY23 BBT LWG Irrigation & Energy Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                         |
|                      | FY23 NCT LWG Animal Water Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                                |
|                      | FY23 NCT LWG Plant Health Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                                |
|                      | FY23 NET LWG Forestry Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                                    |
|                      | FY23 NET LWG Livestock & Irrigation Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                      |
|                      | FY23 NWT LWG Plant & Soil Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                                |
|                      | FY23 NWT LWG WQ & Wildlife Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                               |
|                      | FY23 PLT LWG Ag Production Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                               |
|                      | FY23 PLT LWG WQ Ranking Pool Report (Pending)  |
|                      | FY23 PST LWG Habitat & Degraded Plant Condition Ranking Pool Report (Pending)          |
|                      | FY23 PST LWG WQ & Soil Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                                   |
|                      | FY23 SCT LWG Irrigation Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                                  |
|                      | FY23 SCT LWG Range & Pasture Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                             |
|                      | FY23 SRT LWG Livestock Grazing Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                           |
|                      | FY23 SRT LWG WQ Ranking Pool Report (Pending)  |
|                      | FY23 WPT LWG Soil OM Depletion Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                           |
|                      | FY23 WPT LWG Water Quantity-Naturally Available Moisture Ranking Pool Report (Pending) |
|                      | FY23 SWT LWG Soil Ranking Pool Report (Pending)  |
|                      | FY23 SWT LWG WQ & Upland Habitat Ranking Pool Report (Pending)                         |

Program Payments and Payment Rates

Practice Payment Schedule

NRCS provides financial assistance for selected conservation practices. Download the Washington payment schedules to see which activities qualify, and how much financial assistance is available. Practice scenarios show examples of how financial assistance payments are calculated.

Information on Washington Payment Scenarios can be found here

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Existing 2014 Farm Bill Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)-EQIP Projects

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Yakima Integrated Plan-Toppenish to Tenaway<br>RCPP 1672                      | Screening Worksheet (Pending)<br>Ranking and Practices (Pending) |
| SW WA NIPF Conservation Partnership<br>RCPP 1650                              | Screening Worksheet (Pending)<br>Ranking and Practices (Pending) |
| FY22 RCPP Puyallup Watershed Partnership<br>RCPP #####                        | Ranking Tool (Pending)   |
| FY22 RCPP WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery and Water Quality Improvements<br>RCPP ##### | Ranking Tool (Pending)   |


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Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry

As of November 2021, these thirty three (33) NRCS Conservation Practices and eighty one (81) CSP Enhancements have been identified to deliver quantifiable climate solutions, based primarily on methodologies described in COMET-Planner. These practices reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and/or enhance carbon sequestration in a quantifiable manner and complement the National Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks. The practices also help deliver on USDA’s commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of the U.S. agricultural sector. Many of these conservation activities also provide benefits for climate change adaptation and resilience, but this list does not include all activities supporting adaptation, as it is limited to those with quantifiable mitigation benefits, based on currently available data.

Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Practice List <sup>1</sup>  
Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

| Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories | Code | Conservation Practice Standard Name (link)      |
|---|------|---|
| Soil Health                                   | 327  | Conservation Cover (Acres)                      |
|   | 328  | Conservation Crop Rotation (Acres)              |
|   | 329  | Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (Acres) |
|   | 332  | Strips (Acres)                                  |

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|  |     |   |
|--|-----|---|
|  | 340 | Cover Crop (Acres)  |
|  | 345 | Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (Acres)                    |
|  | 386 | Field Border (Acres)  |
|  | 393 | Filter Strips (Acres)   |
|  | 412 | Grassed Waterways (Acres)   |
|  | 585 | Stripcropping (Acres)   |
|  | 601 | Vegetative Barriers (Feet)  |
|  | 603 | Herbaceous Wind Barriers (Feet)   |
| Nitrogen Management                                | 590 | Nutrient Management (Acres)   |
| Livestock Partnership                              | 366 | Anaerobic Digester (Number)   |
|  | 632 | Waste Separation Facility (Number)                                      |
| Grazing and Pasture                                | 512 | Pasture and Hay Planting (Acres)  |
|  | 528 | Prescribed Grazing (Acres)  |
|  | 550 | Range Planting (Acres)  |
| Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat | 380 | Windbreaks/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (Feet) <sup>2</sup> |
|  | 381 | Silvopasture (Acres)  |
|  | 390 | Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Acres)                                       |
|  | 391 | Riparian Forest Buffer (Acres)  |
|  | 612 | Tree/Shrub Establishment (Acres)  |
|  | 645 | Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Acres)                              |
|  | 650 | Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (Feet) <sup>3</sup>                    |

<sup>1</sup> All listed practices have quantifiable carbon sequestration and/or GHG reduction methodologies described in COMET-Planner. New practices will be added as science progresses and scientifically defensible quantification methodologies are identified to accompany existing and new NRCS conservation practice standards.  
<sup>2</sup> NHCP Notice 172 (July 28, 2021) combined CPS 380 and CPS 650. CPS 380 reflects the new name effective October 1, 2021. CPS 650 remains available in IT applications as States make the transition.  
<sup>3</sup> NHCP Notice 172 will require states to transition fully to CPS 380 by July 28, 2022.

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